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SUBJECT: JAPAN ENVOY: ISRAEL COOPERATING ON INDUSTRIAL PARK
REF: STATE 31417

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Japanese Envoy to the Middle East Ambassador Tatsuo Arima met with Ambassador Jones on April 1 to discuss the Arab League Summit and progress on the planned Japanese industrial park outside of Jericho. The Ambassador also updated Arima on the recent visit of the Secretary. Arima said that planning for the industrial park is going well, and the Israelis are being very supportive. Most of the work with Israel and the Palestinians has been behind the scenes, Arima explained, which is how Japan prefers to work. He expected their feasibility report to be ready just before the G-8 summit in June.

¶2. (C) Ambassador Arima arrived in Israel from the Arab League Summit in Damascus, which Arima said Syrian President Bashar al-Asad was relieved he pulled off. Ambassador Jones noted that the situation in Gaza had probably helped make the summit easier for Asad. Arima explained that he attended the summit, his fifth, as an invited observer of the Arab League. Arima believed that he made the correct decision to participate (reftel), but made clear he was a guest of the Arab League and not Syria. The proceedings at the summit were mostly behind closed doors and, unlike in previous meetings, observers were not allowed to speak. The Japanese did, however, circulate their statement, which supported the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and Abu Mazen's government.

¶3. (C) The main drama at the summit was Iraq's objections to the final statement, which expressed concern about terror but did not specifically condemn terror in Iraq. Arima said that Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat also privately cautioned the Iraqi Vice-President against allowing armed militias to exist outside of government control, a mistake the Palestinian Authority had made. The most interesting speaker, Arima said, was Libyan Leader Muammar al-Qadhafi, even if he did not completely make sense. Qadhafi lamented that the Arabs are not united, with some Arab countries (i.e. Syria) even getting along better with Iran than their fellow Arabs. Qadhafi then added that because 70 percent of Arabs are (North) African, the entire Arab world should join the Africans. Arima added this was the first time he saw Qadhafi stay through the closing session.

¶4. (C) Ambassador Jones also gave Arima a readout on the recent visit of the Secretary to Israel. The Ambassador pointed out that we are beginning to see results, largely because of our continuous efforts and General Fraser's credible and direct Roadmap monitoring efforts. Arima reiterated Japan's support for U.S. efforts, which he sees as more rooted in political reality than in 2000.

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